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He looks down. *Should I? Can I?* Beneath his feet lies his greatest fear. *How did I even end up here? What am I doing?* The adrenaline rush spreads throughout his body. Sweat forms on the palm of his hands, and he swallows the saliva formed within his mouth. There is no time limit. It’s either win or lose, do or die. Would it be worth it? Of course it would! Why then was he here in the first place? The memories rush in to remind him.

In class sat a boy. His eyes showed nonchalance, no enthusiasm, and a sense of tiredness. No breakfast was eaten; only to have rushed out quickly from his home to get to school on time. The medium-length bushy hair covered a corner of his face. Unshaven hair on his chin showed his laziness. The face was painted with signs of puberty. His earphones were still plugged in his ears, blocking reality with music. The bell had rung and the teacher came into the classroom. The boy swiftly removed his earphones and placed it in his backpack. “Alright, let’s begin class.”

While it seemed he was not focused on the lecture the teacher was giving, he blurted out his opinions and ideas spontaneously as if he was listening the whole time. Secretly, but still obviously, he flaunted about his intelligence with snickers and smirks, side-commenting on the contributions of others and believing his to be the best alone. He constantly shook his right leg in his tight pants and gnawed on his thumb nail as if he was nervous about something. “So, who knows anything about masks?” asked the teacher. “A mask is something that disguises your true identity,” exclaimed one of the students in class.

Beneath the smirks, there was a self-conscious boy who was told he wasn’t good enough, that he wasn’t going to become successful in the future. His haughtiness made him stronger and provided a fake veil of confidence, which lacked within him. The only way to keep going was for the boy to constantly tell himself that one day he would be the best. A history of scars and pain, mistakes and criticism, a callous had developed over his own true heart leaving only small but discerning traces through his idiosyncratic movements of biting and shaking. He was like a moth, spreading its ominous-looking wings to fend off predators, if only they realized, pass those thin and vein-like wings, lay a helpless individual, trying to get through life.

However, there was one thing the boy could not hide, the one thing that everyone knew he was gifted at, but the one thing the boy dreaded the most. The boy was leaning against the glass window, staring. “I know,” said the girl. “What do you mean?” asked the boy, alarmed. “Your secret. Your fear of…” Before the girl could finish what she was saying, the boy screamed and he quickly ran away. It wasn’t his fault that he couldn’t handle all the pressure around him. It wasn’t his fault that he ended up not doing it. It wasn’t his fault he stepped down. It just couldn’t be his fault… Or could it?

Voices of the past haunted the boy as he waited for the bus. “You’re good for nothing! Why can’t you stand out like all the rest of your classmates do?” yelled the boy’s mother. “I’m doing my best mom…” explained the boy. “Well, ‘doing your best’ isn’t getting you anywhere now is it? Your efforts aren’t good enough. You’re just incompetent.” *I’m just incompetent. I’m just incompetent. I’m just incompetent…* Everything the boy did afterwards was filled with personal doubts. What if this isn’t good enough? I’m useless if I’m not the best. The words of his mother were like tattoos. Permanent and engraved into the skin, forever to leave a mark even as time passed. And those words did just that. At least up until now.

“Hey, what was that all about?” asked the approaching girl. “It’s nothing… Just don’t mention it,” replied the boy. The girl stared confusingly at the boy. “You know, sometimes you just need confidence. It’s nothing big really. You just got to have faith that you can do it. Sometimes that’s all it takes to overcome fear.” The bus arrived at the bus stop and with no response to the girl, the boy got on to the bus. With his earphones plugged in, the boy’ mused on what the girl had just told him. At first, the boy became intoxicated with frustration *She doesn’t know! She thinks it’s so easy…* The more and more he pondered upon it, the more he realized something: it was the words. Just like the girl said, he just needed to trust in himself. No one else should tell him otherwise.

It was during the night. The boy quickly ran to school and begged the janitor to let him in. He just needed ten minutes. His heart pounded rapidly as he quickly changed in the locker room. Dressed, he stepped into the swimming pool.

*Should I? Can I? Would it be worth it? Of course it would!* Why then was he here in the first place? Beneath his feet lies his greatest fear. *Confidence* whispered the boy. Taking his final breath, the boy jumps.